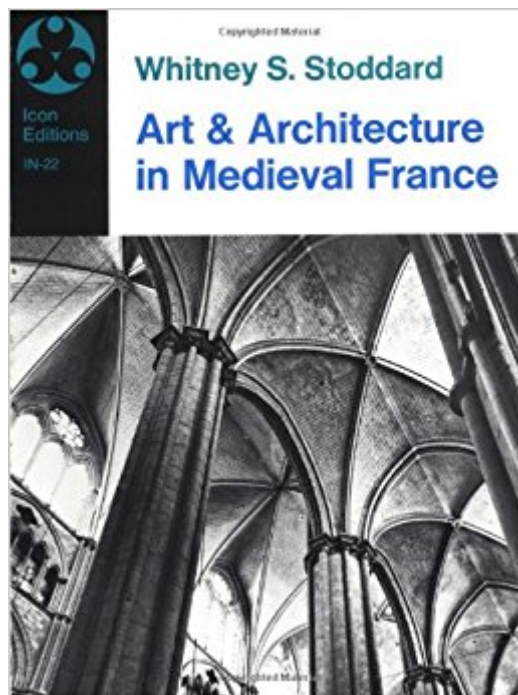




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# **Art And Architecture In Medieval France: Medieval Architecture, Sculpture, Stained Glass, Manuscripts, The Art Of The Church Treasuries (Icon Editions)**



## Synopsis

This is an English-language study on the architecture and art of medieval France of the Romanesque and Gothic periods between 1000-1500. In addition to essays on individual monuments there are general discussions of given periods and specific problems such as: why did Gothic come into being? Whitney Stoddard explores the interrelationship between all forms of medieval ecclesiastical art and characterization of the Gothic cathedral, which he believes to have an almost metaphysical basis.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

great book

Stoddard's book, written in the very early 1970's, remains a highly informative and generally comprehensive introduction to French Gothic architecture. In spite of its age, it can be easily recommended to any person with a more than passing interest in the subject due to its extensive detail and coverage. At nearly 400 pages in relatively small print, this book may take some time and effort to complete, but it is simply one of the best single-volume treatments of the topic in print today. As implied by the title, the book does not focus solely on architectural forms, but also includes extensive descriptions of the art forms (sculptures, stained glass, manuscripts, and other church art forms), and so each historical section finds individual treatment of cathedral and church designs throughout the gothic period as well as the art forms that adorned these structures. The book is thoroughly illustrated with over 400 black-and-white photos and drawings. The book is

divided into periods by chronological order: Romanesque France, Early Gothic of the 12th Century, High Gothic of the Early 13th Century, From Rayonnant to Flamboyant, and a final section on The Treasuries of Monasteries and Cathedrals. Each section starts with a historical background piece and a map listing the primary sites to be discussed before the main content of the text is presented, giving a good foundation to place that content into the proper historical and geographical context. Once establishing the forms (and shortcomings) of Romanesque architectural design, we are chronologically introduced to the aims and goals of the emerging Gothic style, and this lofty style begins to make sense to us, not only as a stylistic form, but a series of specific reactions to "deficiencies" in the Romanesque form. In fact, one of the strengths of Stoddard's approach is that the reader moves through this entire period in relatively strict chronological form, and it is not all that difficult of a task to visualize the chronology of the specific Gothic construction projects as they are undertaken across the Ile-de-France from the 12th through the 13th centuries. Supplemental drawings highlight specific architectural designs, and numerous floor plans help the reader visualize the similarities and differences between specific buildings. Art and Architecture in Medieval France is not only highly detailed, it is immensely enjoyable to read. If there are any shortcomings in the book at all, it is that the text is somewhat small, and one finds that "reach" to the reading glasses occurring on a regular basis. It would also have been nice to find this text with color photos on glossy paper. But to be honest, such a change would significantly increase the price of the volume, and the true value in this text lies not in the photos (which are good enough to visualize the discussion) but in Stoddard's research and written presentation, which is solid, informative, and often thought-provoking. If you are looking for a single-volume introduction to Gothic art and architecture, and have more than a passing interest in doing so, this book remains one of the best choices you could make to do so. Supplement it with any of the lavishly illustrated full-color photo coffee table books to get a better sense of the visual format of these buildings and art forms, and better yet, use it as research for making your own visits to the Gothic cathedrals of northern and central France.

Professor Stoddard's opus Art and Architecture in Medieval France : Medieval Architecture, Sculpture, Stained Glass, Manuscripts, the Art of the Church Treasuries is still a viable and valuable work to study for any student of the Gothic era. The information provided allowed me to understand the cathedrals of France clearly and was an indispensable aid when I was lucky enough to visit several of the cathedrals addressed. While not a "light" read, Dr. Stoddard is the standard for the era. I envy any student of his, those lucky gargoyles!!!

for Tina , as the price. just fine. As a professional chef i need and use top quality knives. I have a number of well known brands and most are high quality. This product, however, particularly because of the price, is as good or better than most all of them. I am buying now just to have at this price. Don't wait get it, or get two. have a good experience.

I have used \_Monastery and Cathedral\_ as a teaching text and as a guidebook. It's worth lugging through France, even by train: photos are b/w but well chosen & informative, and follow the text well. Stoddard gives good contextual background and is clear in his description and explication of the most important medieval churches in France. Could do more with sculpture and symbolism: the main focus is architecture. But his section on treasures, manuscripts & stained glass is a good start. I'm about to use it as a text for an on-site summer course: it's a tried and true old friend.

I've now slogged through four books on Middle Age church architecture and this one is by far the best. The book is written clearly and not unnecessarily burdened with "professor-speak." At the same time, it provided more information, and more interesting information, than the other three books combined. A couple of cautions: the book focuses on Gothic architecture; Romanesque architecture is discussed more as an introduction to Gothic architecture. And it doesn't have a glossary, which is a downside for readers not familiar with architectural terms.

Stoddard's text, culled mainly from early to mid-20th century monographs, is a highly readable and well-illustrated account of some of the major Gothic edifices of France but it should be treated with caution. Most of the scholarship is hopelessly out of date (and much of it already was when he wrote it) and he is too uncritical of the grand theorising of Simson & Panofsky et al. If it is to be used, it should be read in conjunction with Paul Crossley's footnotes to Frankl. I teach French Gothic architecture at undergraduate level and I always advise my students to steer clear of Stoddard. Suitable for a keen amateur but not for art history majors.

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